

New museum puts stamp on U.S. history

It's designed to show how mail has affected Americans

By **RANDY SCHMID**
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — More than a century ago, a cold, homeless terrier puppy sought solace in a pile of mailbags in Albany, N.Y. Workers took pity and let him stay, launching the pooch on a nine-year career traveling 143,-

and air mail as it tied Americans together throughout the nation's history.

Museum visitors are guided along a simulated forest pathway like one followed by mail carriers before the nation had roads.

They are challenged to plot the best route for mail over rivers, mountains and valleys — using

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**— James H. Bruns, director
National Postal Museum**

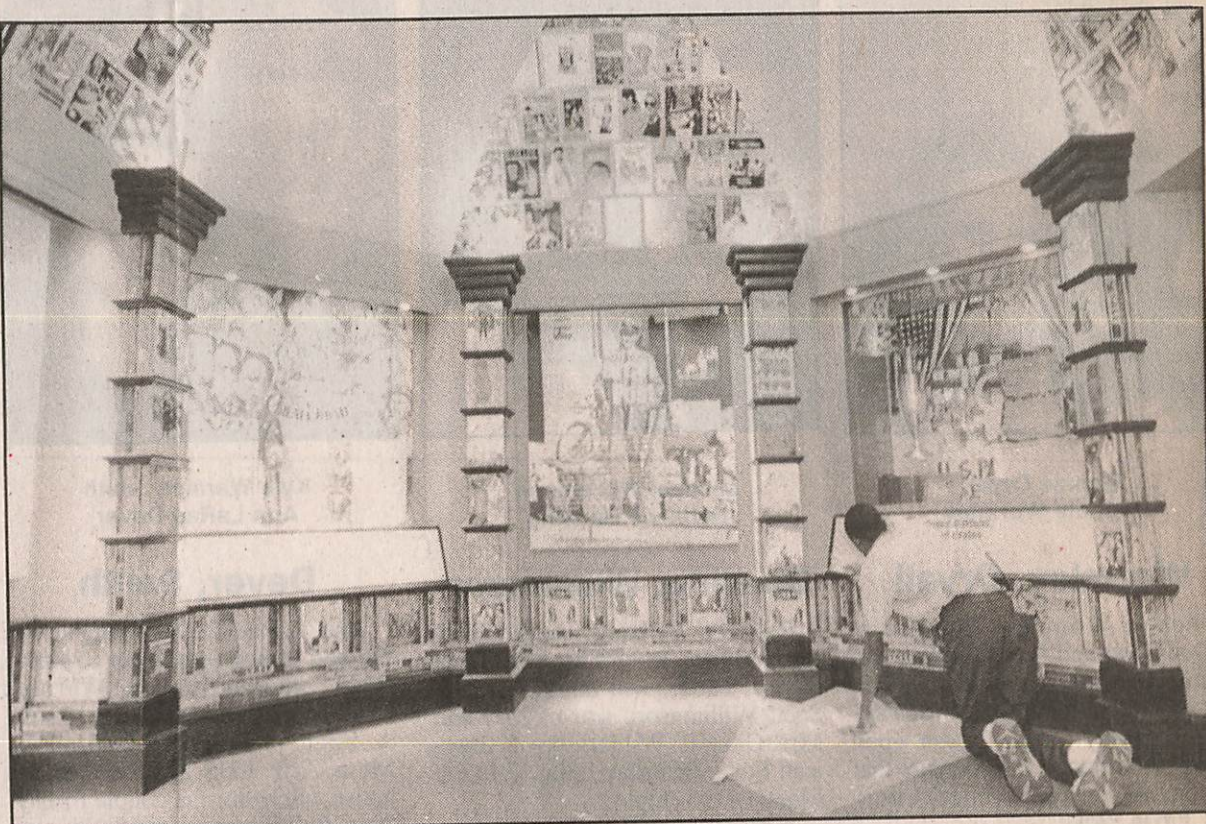
000 miles around the world with the mail.

Thanks to the art of taxidermy, the dog maintains a stately place in U.S. Mail history — in a glass case amidst three early mail

19th century transportation.

They are introduced to the joy and heartbreak of letters from soldiers at war.

And, with the Smithsonian's collection forming the backbone of the new museum, visitors are



AP Photo

A worker is shown at the National Postal Museum in Washington, July 21. The 75,000 sq. ft., \$15.4 million museum opened Friday and occupies much of the former Washington City Post Office. It will display millions of rare and not-so-rare stamps, plus the world's largest library of postal history.

The three-year renovation to create the museum cost \$15.4 million provided by the U.S. Postal Service, which will share in the museum's operating costs

mother from a young man killed in Vietnam. It was the letter found in his helmet after his untimely death.

There are also moving letters

simply an 18-month experiment that lost money every hoofbeat.

Special mail problems in cities and rural areas are discussed, including the development of rural

mail car at the Smithsonian Institution's new National Postal Museum that opened to the public Friday, July 30.

"The museum is much more than just a collection of stamps," said James H. Bruns, director of the new facility.

For example, the history of the mail is intimately linked with transportation, he explained, and the 90-foot high central gallery highlights that relationship.

The movement of mail led to the development of post roads and stage routes, steamship routes

given a chance to see some of the world's rarest stamps and the world's largest library of postal history and materials.

A part of that history is the little dog Owey, who was befriended by mail clerks and allowed to ride along on trucks and railway cars first to New York, then to other cities, and eventually on a steamer trip around the world.

But there is more in the 75,000 square-foot museum that occupies much of the former Washington City Post Office which is adjacent to Union Station.

Perhaps most moving is "the smallest gallery with greatest impact," in the words of museum curator Nancy Pope — a section that is devoted to letter-writing.

Included is a wartime wife's letter, almost pleading for her husband to write that he is still alive, and returned marked "deceased."

There is a series of letters from the Maddens of Virginia, chronicling the lives of this family since the 1700s.

There is also a last letter to a

nation, telling of their successes and failures, their concerns and hopes.

Another gallery contains a 1931 Ford mail truck and Charles Lindbergh's application to be an airmail pilot.

The displays on mail and American history include Benjamin Franklin's rate chart and envelopes sent by Civil War soldiers as well as prisoners of war.

Of course, there is a display on the highly romanticized Pony Express, though in reality it was

Art in cards and letters is featured in an exhibit.

Rarities on display include a singed envelope carried on the burned German zeppelin Hindenburg, the famous 1918 airmail stamp with the Curtiss Jenny biplane upside down and an envelope carried by aviator Amelia Earhart.

Even the uniform worn by Cliff Claven, the erudite letter carrier from the television show "Cheers," is on display at the museum.

APRIL 17

Postmaster expects to be enveloped in panic, chaos on tax-deadline day

Avoid traffic jams by using boxes that will have a late pickup at 11:30 p.m.

By Sharon M. Haddock

Deseret News staff writer

OREM — Orem postmaster Wally Adams expects things to get "pretty interesting" around midafternoon Monday, April 17.

That's when he expects most American taxpayers will be wanting to mail their 1994 income tax returns — taking advantage of the extra weekend days this year.

"That's when you can count on all roads leading to the post office," said Adams. "Since we are predicting heavy tax-related traf-

fic in the vicinity of the main post office again this year, we have taken an extra step or two to alleviate some of that congestion."

Postal customers can avoid a trip to the main office by mailing their returns or extension requests early in the day at any collection box or contract station in Orem.

However, Adams said everyone should double-check the pickup schedule on the collection boxes.

Late collections will be made at 11:30 p.m. at the boxes at the University Mall self-service unit, at 30 W. Center Street west of McDonald's, Macey's on 800 North and Smith's at 45 S. State.

All mail posted before midnight will receive an April 17 cancella-

tion at the Salt Lake City processing facility.

Normally, cutoff time for deposited mail is 5:45 p.m. weekdays and 4:30 p.m. on weekends. The temporary extension is designed to help late filers.

"This certainly can be a hectic time," said Adams. "And in the hustle and bustle of completing and signing forms, it's easy to overlook the simple things. Try to mail as early in the day as possible. Be certain to weigh your returns on a postal scale and calculate the proper amount of postage."

"This is especially true if you are filing extra forms or schedules this year," said Adams. "Tax agencies will not pay postage due."

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